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RIVER VERSES

—
LOWELL STARR



1

Literary Editor



POEMS River Verses



BY LOWELL STARR

*A former Editor of the
Red Cross Magazine*

The collected poems of Lowell Starr make their appearance as something new in modern lyrics and sonnets, and savour of the boundless freedom of life in Nature's great out-of-doors.

Mr. Starr is a deep student of contemporary verse and a product of the famous Harvard School of poets. His poetic expression is natural and true, lifted above the ordinary by an inner sense of exultation.

The simplest and truest forms of poetry are valued from the standpoint of music, and in Mr. Starr's verse there is always a pleasant combination of tinkling symbols. Whether writing sonnets or *vers libre*, he never deviates from the artistic pathway, manifesting at all times a remarkable sense of rhythm, harmony, and vowel-melody.

He is a thoroughgoing New Englander and his works have been inspired, in great part, by the beautiful Berkshire hills and the Charles River country around Boston—a historic surrounding which has caused many a Harvard poet to break into verse.

RICHARD G. BADGER—Publisher—BOSTON

(over)

Starr





AUBURNDALE-ON-THE-CHARLES

P O E M S

RIVER VERSES
AND OTHERS

BY
LOWELL STARR

WITH SKETCHES BY THE AUTHOR



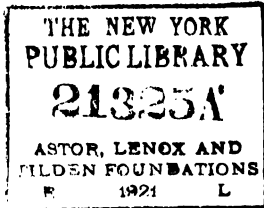
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POEMS

RIVER VERSES
AND OTHERS

CHARLIE RIVER

On the Charlie River,
By day by night,
Where the aspens quiver,
Seek we delight
In a canoe,
Bobbie and I.

There the blue sky blazes,
Dazzles thru the mist,
As the Sun raises
Vapour Sunbeam kist
From the emerald shores.

And the pine trees bend and sigh,
Sad as if repining,
As we paddle by,
Or, perhaps divining
Youth's Eternal Spring
For Bobbie and me.

So the redwinged blackbirds,
Crane and tanager,
Bursting forth in songwords,
Chorus there's no danger
From a red canoe,
From Bobbie and me.



Yonder rise the castle walls,
Turrets, moat by
Drawbridge spanned,
Of some unknown Jaspard's Halls,
Here in Nature's fairyland
Of woods and flowers.

Come we now to tiny islands,
Breaking up the broad
Expanse (of the River, of
the Charlie River)
And lagoons like wreathed garlands,

Hedged with pine and bush,
Forming turquoise patches
In the underbrush,
Waving as it catches
Gentle Zephyr's breath,
Entrancing Bobbie and me.

And our red canoe,
Frail, responsive thing,
Rides the rippled blue,
Balanced like a bird on wing,
Cheerily on,
With Bobbie and me.

Dreaming, fondly dreaming,
Of the days to come,
Out there on the River (on
the Charlie River),
Where Youth's currents run,
There is perfect freedom,
Blessed happiness,
Making earth a paradise
Of forgetfulness.





A PATCH OF BLUE

That little patch of blue!
How bright and beautiful
It seems when I,
Entombed within the confines
Of these barren walls,
Peer out between the dusty
window ledge
And shutters into the azure
Blue of vast Eternity!



BITTERSWEET

I know not why the Bittersweet,
A paradox of Nature,
Should give a pleasing taste
To any living Creature;
And yet, when yesterday
I won a gentle kiss,
It waxed so sweet and bitter,
'Twas neither that nor this.
And so in days to come,
If e'er our lips shall meet,
I'll span the dingy past
And beg for Bittersweet.

CONSOLATION

In the land of old romance
Once I lived, long, long ago;
In a world of song and dance,
It was coloured rainbow-fashion
With the tint of crimson wine,
With the sweet of stolen kisses,
And the thrill of Love divine;
But the rainbow now has faded
To a sadder, greyer hue,
'Til the safer, saner world
I leave but seldom now,
Just for Consolation's sake.

SYMPATHY

What is Life's Stuff then,
Anyway, without response,
Without a share in its
Creation, too! Alas, I crave
The friendship of the Dust.
How hard it is to reach
The trembling fingertip
Along the Lyre's limp strings
And find no firm, responsive
Chord to satiate the Soul
With its due Harmony. A tale . . .
A Soul without a Mate,
With but a Universe to tell it to.

EMPATHY

My heart's abound with joy,
This gay, May day with all its
Wealth of azure skies
Above the shadowy, lacelike
Imagery of the leaving trees
All bursting forth alike
Expanding Nature's pride.
Could I but live a fleeting
Moment way up there,
Aloft, on high somewhere
And set my soulwings free, . . .
Enjoy the interrupted
Pleasures here outside the
Magic Circle of Life's
Vital Force, . . . I stay, and long,
And find the World unreal.

FATE

Much we'd like to tell our dear ones
All the secrets of the heart,
Down where our everready memory runs,
Erasing all the darker part;
Love is just the one lone secret
In between the written lines;
Never shall the pen disclose it,
Ever sacred, as the Fates divine.

CHANCE

Upon the barren plain
There was a storm;
A sheet of blinding rain,
A draught of teardrops warm;
And then, . . . a welling flood
Of Penitence without a Cause.
Thunder and lightning,
With a chill wind through
The bushes blowing,
And the dry reeds,
Cracking and complaining,
Shed their seeds.
But which among them
Will that tempest stand?
Poor little pawns of Chance!
A million others might
This Earth sometime enhance
If Nature cared a wight.
'Tis best, perhaps, she doesn't care
And leave them in a Game of Chance,
As Players Unaware.

VIOLIN SONNET TO HAFI

Ah, Paganini, old;
A Veteran Minstrel, Thou,
Responsive to your bow
Your subtle curves I hold.

A tender, furtive Soul
Your vibrant walls confine;
A Saint, elusive, yet Divine,
Thy mysteries unroll!

But if your frail body
A hundred Souls enclose,
For you I'll then compose
A minor melody,

A tune for Hafi's sake
To keep Her Soul awake!

AEROSONNET

Descends, all but unseen,
An autumn leaf on high,
From the garden of the sky,
Red, white, and green.
It gleams in proud descent
To wondering multitudes below,
Beginning fast to show
Its faltering course, . . . life spent.
Close now to earth, it blows,
Touching only lightly there
The emerald field so fair
Whence first it rose,
 Green, white, and red,
 Its glory ever dead.

YOUTH'S STREAM

At eventide there falls a hush upon the stream,
The time when owls and nightbirds scream
With shrill and startling cries,
Among the lofty pines with their soft sighs,
And vesper bells across the mead have rung,
Announcing the night to come.

Just at this lull we o'er the silvery water skim
In a canoe so frail and slim,
Sliding thru the rippling tide,
As if its slender form to hide
From that vast mirror,
Its image even clearer.

Gliding, slipping,
Paddle softly dripping
Tink a tanka
Tank a tink, . . . plash,
The paddles rise and dip (O, so
softly rise and fall),

And listening to the nightbirds' song,
As o'er the stream we rove,
We seek a dark, sequestered cove,
And hide us there.

So cool, and dark, and still,
All quiet, save the croaking frogs
And whip-poor-will,
And yet beyond the fringeing bush,
The crescent moon, unwearied Watchman of the night,
Sends down his pale, unlavish light.

So dark, and still, and cool,
Within that limpid pool,
Bristling, ebon shadows round us,
Like impervious walls beyond us,
Twinkling stars grow dim and fade,
As we lie within the circling shade.

So still, and cool, and dark,
Hid in the bosom of that woodland park
And nestling snugly in the frail canoe
As lovers oft are wont to do,
We feel the thrill of joy supreme,
The waking passion of a youthful dream.

Gliding, slipping,
Paddle softly dripping,
Tink a tanka
Tank a tink, . . . splash.
The paddles rise and dip (O, so
softly rise and fall),
Leaving naught but memories and dreams
Of pleasures found on Youth's Immortal Stream.



MOON EAGLE

A yellow haze had veiled her face,
A cross of white stood on her brow,
Her arms stretched outward to erase
Four streaming bands of light below
Upon the black Horizon's countenance.

When, lo, the warrior-lady frowns,
Her face grows deathly pale, . . . not cold,
Tempered white hot, for passion knows no bounds;
An ebon eagle folds his wings
Upon the banded brilliance of her arm.

She sends him down the path of white,
Headlong to earth, his dusky wings outspread,
Her colour fails, the earth grows dark,
Until he shall return, . . . his havoc wrought . . .
To tell her that his mission's done.

TO A VIOLETTE

A tiny, purple thing
You'll say! Modest perhaps,
It tries to hide, at least,
Its soft, mauve hue beneath
A canopy of green.
But, ah, its evanescent charm
Is gloried beyond
The fancied worth of gems,
The glint of gold,
The silver's chilly sheen,
Tawdry and cheap displayed,
But senseless stones that stay
From age to age unchanged,
That neither hear nor feel,
Nor know the joy to grow,
To live, and fade and die.
O Violette, raise your head!
'Tis true you stole your hue,
You robbed the Sunset glow;
Alas, 'tis but to wonder how
You keep it so!

MATIN

You, Cuckoo,
There beyond the park,
Hiding your haughty,
Restless glance the while;
Why don't you ever
Fly across and
Light upon my
Window-ledge to
Take the crumbs I've
Spread and sing your
Matin-song, . . . to me?



THE PEAKS OF DESTINY

Sweetheart, 'tis you
Who stirs my Soul
Each morn beyond the
Bounds of Heart's control

When I awake and peer
Into the brilliance of
The morning sky and feel
Its molten radiance,

I see your face
Beaming at me afar
In the Sun's first rays,
Like a morning star.

All day, through the busy
Hours, your happiness is mine,
And so I know unquestionably
Your Soul's attune with me.

Again at Sunset beyond
The corniced heights
Of brick and stone,
Above the city towers
And spires, when I'm alone,

I see You, too; ah,
Could I then but fly
With You into the Crimson
Lake of Setting Sun!

Among the friendly hills,
Far, far away they rise,
Bedeckt in their mauve frills,
Amid the saffron skies,

Ever there, and yet to
Mortal's dazzled eyes
Not oft in view, the barrier
Of Eternity defies.

'Tis You, Sweetheart,
Who every evening spurs me on
To find somewhere, apart,
Beyond the fading horizon,

Up, up, among the bald,
Majestic Peaks of Destiny,
That Royal Road, where I
Can reign with You, Supreme.

I ask You now, my Queen,
"What would You give,
(If this be not an idle dream)
"To crown him with Success?"



FIRELIGHT AND DAWN

Have you in your many travels
Sat before a dying fire
In some sylvan wilderness
With your Heart's Desire?

When the moon, so big and red,
Buried in its misty shrouds,
Strives to hold its heavy head
Above the haze and clouds.

And the night sounds all around
Make you know the World's alive,
When afar off night birds sound
Their hollow, plaintive calls.

While the heavy night air brings
The welcome gift of Sleep;
As the forest swells and rings
With echoes hushed and deep.

In the fading embers there
Burning eyes grow grey
And dim beneath their coverlet
Of warm, grey ash.

The drowsy night wind comes
And bids the weary soul
Retreat to rest upon the
Hemlock boughs beside the fire.

Lucky are you to find
The slanting, yellow streaks
Of dawn waking your sleeping soul,
Responsive to the beckoning morn.

Rich are you, when you can lie
Snug in your cozy lair,
Beneath the sparkling sky
Fresh in the dew-laid air,

And watch the new-born day awake,
Throw off night cap and robes,
And don the sunbeamed raiment
Of another Summer's Day.



TO HER

Long I've waited here
To meet a maiden fair;
She was rich in Youth
And wavy, chestnut hair;
But when I looked into
Her lovely eyes and
Noted her soft glance,
So timid and surprised,
I felt I loved.
Well I know the glance
I gave her, too;
It was adoring, and . . .
If Heaven be my judge,
Confessing Truth.

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